

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 121770

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OAS

SUBJECT: CANDIDACIES FOR OAS SECRETARY GENERAL AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

1. BACKGROUND:

A. IN APRIL 1975 THE OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL
ELECT (BY MAJORITY VOTE) A NEW SECRETARY GENERAL AND
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL FOR FIVE YEAR TERMS, REPLACING
GALO PLAZA OF ECUADOR AND MIGUEL RAFAEL URQUIA OF
EL SALVADOR.

B. TO DATE FOREIGN MINISTER RAUL SAPENA PASTOR OF
PARAGUAY IS THE ONLY PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED CANDIDATE FOR
SECRETARY GENERAL, ALTHOUGH OTHERS SEEM TO BE IN THE
WINGS. THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING LAUNCHING
THE CANDIDACY OF FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL
CARLOS GARCIA BEDOYA AND IS TAKING SOUNDINGS. OTHER
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NAMES THAT HAVE BEEN MENTIONED AS POSSIBILITIES, BUT

SO FAR WITHOUT ANY INDICATION OF OFFICIAL BACKING, ARE:
FROM VENEZUELA, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER MARCOS FALCON
BRICENO AND FORMER CABINET MINISTER AND ECLA EXECUTIVE
SECRETARY JOSE ANTONIO MAYOBRE; FROM ARGENTINA FORMER
FOREIGN MINISTER CARLOS MUNIZ, WHITE HOUSE AMBASSADOR
ALEJANDRO ORFILA, OAS PERM REP RAUL QUIJANO, AND CEPICIECC
CHAIRMAN RODOLFO MARTINEZ. FOREIGN MINISTER GONZALO FACIO
OF COSTA RICA WAS MENTIONED EARLIER, BUT HAS STATED

PUBLICLY HE IS NOT A CANDIDATE.

C. FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL, THE GUATEMALAN
GOVERNMENT HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THE CANDIDACY OF FORMER
OAS PERM REP JORGE LUIS ZELAYA CORONADO, NOW IN THE LEGAL
DEPARTMENT OF THE OAS SECRETARIAT. PRESUMABLY THEY ARE
SEEKING EARLY CENTRAL AMERICAN BACKING, ON THE BASIS THAT
THE POSITION SHOULD STAY WITH CENTRAL AMERICA (A QUESTION-
ABLE THESIS). THERE ARE NO OTHER ANNOUNCED CANDIDATES TO
DATE. ABOUT A YEAR AGO BARBADOS PERM REP (NOW AMBASSADOR
TO VENEZUELA) VALERIE MC COMIE INDICATED SOME INTEREST,
BUT WE HAVE HEARD NOTHING FURTHER.

D. U.S. CITIZEN STUART PORTNER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR MANAGEMENT IN THE OAS SECRETARIAT, HAS BEEN TAKING
PERSONAL SOUNDINGS ON HIS OWN BEHALF FOR THE NUMBER TWO
SLOT. HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN WINNING THE TENTATIVE SUPPORT
OF SEVERAL OAS REPS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE APPROACHED US
ABOUT HIM, MENTIONING THE DESIRABILITY OF THE U.S.
"RECOVERING" THE POSITION. WE HAVE NO INDICATION, HOWEVER,
THAT THERE IS ANYTHING APPROACHING A CONSENSUS THAT THE
U.S. SHOULD HAVE THIS POST, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHO OUR
CANDIDATE MIGHT BE. (FROM 1948 TO 1968 THE POST OF
ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL WAS HELD BY U.S. CITIZENS. IN
THE ELECTION OF 1968, IN ORDER TO WIN OVER CENTRAL
AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR GALO PLAZA AS SECRETARY GENERAL, THE
U.S. WITHDREW THE UNOPPOSED CANDIDACY FOR ASSISTANT
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE U.S. CITIZEN INCUMBENT IN FAVOR
OF URQUIA.)

2. U.S. POSITION ON SECRETARY GENERAL:
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IN RESPONSE TO QUERIES TO DATE FROM INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS,
THE DEPARTMENT AND USOAS IN EACH INSTANCE HAS INDICATED
THAT THE USG OF COURSE CONSIDERS THE POSITION OF SECRETARY
GENERAL TO BE A VERY IMPORTANT ONE AND IS PLEASED THAT MEN
OF THE STATURE OF THE ANNOUNCED OR POTENTIAL CANDIDATES
ARE MENTIONED FOR IT. WE HAVE FURTHER SAID THAT WE
EXPECTED SOUNDINGS TO BE TAKEN ON BEHALF OF A NUMBER OF

CANDIDATES DURING THE COMING MONTHS AND THAT A PREMATURE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN ONE CANDIDATE BY THE USG WOULD BE UNWISE. WHILE WE SHARE A STRONG INTEREST IN THE QUESTION OF WHO WILL BE THE NEXT SECRETARY GENERAL, WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE VIEWS OF AS MANY MEMBER COUNTRIES AS POSSIBLE BEFORE JOINING IN CHOOSING THE NEXT PERSON TO HOLD THIS IMPORTANT POST.

3. U.S. POSITION ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL:

SIMILARLY, IN RESPONSE TO APPROACHES FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WE HAVE STRESSED THE NEED TO SELECT A HIGHLY QUALIFIED PERSON AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL AND HAVE REPLIED THAT THE USG HAS MADE NO DECISION TO SUPPORT ANY CANDIDATE AND THAT WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HAVE A BETTER APPRECIATION OF THE VIEWS OF OTHER MEMBERS BEFORE DOING SO. IN ANY EVENT, IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE OUTLOOK FOR THE TOP SPOT SINCE THERE SHOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO. IN REPLY TO THOSE WHO RAISE THE POSSIBILITY OF A U.S. CANDIDATE AND/OR WHO SPECIFICALLY MENTION PORTNER, WE ADD THAT THE USG HAS MADE NO DECISION ON EITHER SCORE.

4. ACTION REQUESTED:

A. ON AN IF ASKED BASIS, POSTS MAY DRAW ON PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3 ABOVE IN REPLYING TO HOST GOVERNMENTS. WE PREFER THAT YOU NOT INITIATE DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL NAMES SINCE MOST POTENTIAL CANDIDACIES ARE SPECULATIVE. WE DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION WE ARE FOR OR AGAINST ANYBODY AT THIS STAGE. WE WILL MAKE UP OUR MINDS AFTER FULL CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER CONFIDENTIAL

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MEMBERS.

B. FOR EMBASSY GUATEMALA: IF APPROACHED ON ZELAYA, YOU MAY SAY WE HAVE A HIGH REGARD FOR HIM, THAT HE HAS BEEN A GOOD FRIEND TO OUR OAS MISSION, AND THAT WE WILL CERTAINLY GIVE HIS CANDIDACY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION -- WHILE OTHERWISE REMAINING NON-COMMITTAL AS ABOVE.

C. FOR ALL POSTS: WITHOUT TAKING THE INITIATIVE AT THIS STAGE, PLEASE REPORT ANY APPROACHES BY HOST GOVERNMENTS AND ANY INFORMATION THE LATTER MAY GIVE AS TO CANDIDACIES AND PREFERENCES, AS WELL AS SIGNIFICANT PRESS OR OTHER SPECULATION.

D. FOR EMBASSY MEXICO CITY: RE YOUR 4630,
JUST RECEIVED, THE FOREGOING IS RESPONSIVE. KISSINGER

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